



# NEWS RELEASE

## IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

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### **Water Board Approves Loans, Makes Plans for ESPA Plan Meetings**

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The Idaho Water Resource Board last week began making plans to hold a series of public meetings to solicit input for developing the framework for a Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer comprehensive management plan as directed by the Idaho Legislature.

Meeting last Friday in Pocatello, the Water Board members were presented with a draft public involvement plan by CDR Associates, consultants to the Board, which included tentative plans to hold meetings in Idaho Falls, Pocatello, and Twin Falls in mid-October. Dates and locations are still being determined. Advertisements will be purchased and press releases issued informing the public of a final meeting schedule once arrangements have been made.

In other business, the Water Board approved a \$3 million loan to Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc. on behalf of several ground water districts. The money will be used to finance the ground water district's obligations under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) enacted last May by Idaho Governor Jim Risch and Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns. The agreement calls for Idaho to provide a one-time incentive of \$30 per acre to eligible ground water users who agree stop pumping water for 15-years. The 2005 Idaho Legislature appropriated \$3 million to the Water Board for loans to the ground water districts. The money must be paid back in 15-years at four percent interest. The goal of the CREP program is to remove from production for 15-years 100,000 acres irrigated with ground water.

The Water Board also approved a five-year \$26,000 loan to the Ranch Subdivision Property Owners Association, northeast of Boise. The association will use the money to install an arsenic removal system on their drinking water supply. Interest on the loan is six percent.

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